

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An interactive electronic program guide (IPG) including a display screen comprising:

a database local to a viewer for storing television schedule information including information about television programs and a plurality of criteria associated with each television program; and

a microprocessor local to the viewer configured to automatically generate a set of favorite criteria about television programs that the viewer would likely be interested in, search the database for identifying a television program that includes at least one of the favorite criteria, tag the identified television program stored in the local database that includes the at least one of the favorite criteria, and activate a function of the IPG related to the tagged television program without viewer's intervention.

2. The IPG of claim 1 further comprising a display controller for automatically displaying on the display screen a portion of the schedule information including the identified television program in guide format.

3. The IPG of claim 1 wherein the favorite criteria includes one or more of actor's name, director's name, type of program, other broadcast times, other broadcast sources, and program theme.

4. The IPG of claim 1 wherein the microprocessor is configured to monitor and store the viewer's selections of television programs, and heuristically learn the viewer's favorite criteria according to the viewer's selections of television programs.

5. The IPG of claim 1 wherein the activated function is automatically tuning to the tagged television program at scheduled telecast time.

6. The IPG of claim 1 wherein the activated function is automatically programming a recording device to record the tagged television program at scheduled telecast time.

7. The IPG of claim 1 wherein the activated function is automatically reminding the viewer to view the tagged television program.

8. The IPG of claim 1 wherein the activated function is automatically downloading a copy of the tagged television program to a digital storage medium at scheduled telecast time.

9. A method for identifying favorite television programs for a viewer in an interactive television program guide (IPG) having a display screen, the method comprising:

5 storing television schedule information in a database local to the viewer including information about television programs and a plurality of criteria associated with each television program;

automatically generating a set of favorite criteria about television programs that the viewer would likely be interested in;

10 searching the database for identifying a television program that includes at least one of the favorite criteria;

tagging the identified television program stored in the local database that includes the at least one of the favorite criteria; and

15 activating a function of the IPG related to the tagged television program without viewer's intervention.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising automatically displaying on the display screen a portion of the schedule information including the identified television program in guide format.

20 11. The method of claim 9 wherein the favorite criteria includes one or more of actor's name, director's name, type of program, other broadcast times, other broadcast sources, and program theme.

25 12. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of automatically generating a favorite criteria comprises monitoring and storing the viewer's selections of television programs, and heuristically learning the viewer's favorite criteria according to the viewer's selections of television programs.

13. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of activating a function of the IPG comprises automatically tuning to the tagged television program at scheduled telecast time.

14. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of automatically activating a function of the IPG comprises automatically programming a recording device to record the tagged television program at scheduled telecast time.

15. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of automatically activating a function of the IPG comprises automatically reminding the viewer to view the tagged television program.

16. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of automatically activating a function of the IPG comprises automatically downloading a copy of the tagged television program to a digital storage medium at scheduled telecast time.

17. An interactive electronic program guide (IPG) including a display screen comprising:

means local to a viewer for storing television schedule information including information about television programs and a plurality of criteria associated with each television program; and

means local to the viewer for automatically generating a set of favorite criteria about television programs that the viewer would likely be interested in;

means local to the viewer for searching the database for identifying a television program that includes at least one of the favorite criteria;

means local to the viewer for tagging the identified television program stored in the local database that includes the at least one of the favorite criteria; and

means local to the viewer for activating a function of the IPG related to the tagged television program without viewer's intervention.

18. The IPG of claim 17 further comprising means for automatically displaying on the display screen a portion of the schedule information including the identified television program in guide format.

19. The IPG of claim 17 wherein the favorite criteria includes one or more of actor's name, director's name, and type of program.

20. The IPG of claim 17 wherein the means for automatically generating a favorite criteria comprises means for monitoring and storing the viewer's selections of television

programs, and heuristically learning the viewer's favorite criteria according to the viewer's selections of television programs.